60p

THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

79

Psi: the secret agent
The Dragon and the leys
Contact with the Pleiades
The anger of Annemarie
Ghost on trial

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THE Unexplained
MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

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The farmer and the cosmonauts

Cousins of the human race dwell in the Pleiades star cluster – and a Swiss farmer is their confidant on Earth. PETER BROOKESMITH analyses his claims, and the remarkably detailed photographs that back them up

EARLY ONE JANUARY AFTERNOON in 1975, a Swiss farmer, Billy Meier, was out walking near his home at Hinwel, in Zurich canton. He looked across the empty road to the meadow opposite and reflected on how remote this stretch of countryside was. Just then, however, he realised that he was not alone: a peculiar hum filled the air. He looked up and saw a classic UFO – a silver disc-shaped craft – circling slowly above him.

By unusual good fortune Billy Meier was carrying a camera. He managed to take a number of pictures of the craft before it 'swooped down' and landed about 300 feet (100 metres) away from him. He judged it to be about 23 feet (7 metres) in diameter. He began to run towards it, but was stopped by 'an unknown force' some 150 feet (50 metres) from the craft. Then, as Meier looked on amazed, a figure appeared from behind the grounded disc and approached him.

So began the first of more than 100 meetings with cosmonauts from the Pleiades star cluster. In the course of them Meier took some 3000 pages of notes and hundreds of photographs. From his experience came a book: *UFO . . . contact from the Pleiades*. And the whole strange business set off a major controversy among ufologists.

Three 'Pleiadean spacecraft' hover above the Swiss countryside in one of the innumerable sightings claimed by Billy Meier. They have supposedly travelled more than 400 light years to reach the Earth. But they employ a technology so advanced that 'fractions of seconds are sufficient to accomplish light years . . .

Meier's story was first investigated – and publicised – by Wendelle Stevens, a retired USAF colonel living in Tucson, Arizona. According to Stevens he first heard of the Meier contacts through a niece of the psychologist C. G. Jung, with whom he had been swapping pictures of UFOs for some years. (Stevens is said to have one of the largest collections of UFO photographs in the world.) In 1975 she learned about Meier's pictures, taken only some 35 miles (55 kilometres) from her home, and went to visit Meier. Stevens says that she met eight other witnesses to the Pleiadean contacts during her two-day stay and collected more pictures. Copies of these were sent to Stevens, and in due course the lady arrived in Tucson to see him, bringing some 16 more photographs with her. 'The pictures were super fantastic. I had never seen anything like them before,' said Stevens.

A correspondence then grew up between Stevens and Meier, with Jung's niece acting as courier and translator. 'This went on for eight or nine months before I decided I'd better go and look this guy in the eye. He was taking more and more pictures and they all looked really good.'

Not everyone who looks at Billy Meier's

photographs is as impressed by them, but Stevens duly flew to London and went on to Switzerland by train. There he learned that Meier had begun having unusual and anomalous experiences at the age of five, when he saw a 'large circular craft' fly over the local church. From about that time until the age of eight he heard voices in his head. Then a new voice took over and apparently acted as a guide – 'tutoring' him, according to Stevens. Which was perhaps just as well, for Meier left school at the age of 12 to begin a life of odd-jobbing and oddity, which included car-racing, a short period in jail for thieving, a spell of service with the French Foreign Legion and a couple of years in an Indian ashram – followed by gainful employment in an Indian village as official snake catcher. He worked his way to Turkey, where he claimed to have acted as an informer for US drug-smuggling investigators and so paid his way back to Switzerland.

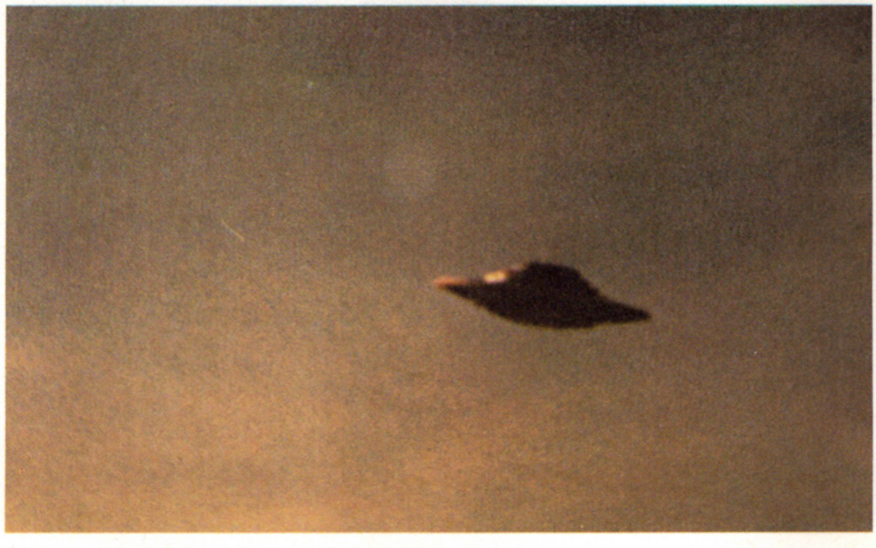
Right: Billy Meier had a chequered history even before the Pleiadeans made their alleged contacts with him. It included periods in jail, in the French Foreign Legion and in an Indian ashram. In a former life, he was told, he was a Pleiadean

Exodus in space

While at the ashram, Meier had started to hear voices again. This time they were female and said they were from 'the Dal universe'. While in India he also saw 'spacecraft' once again and took photographs of them – as he also did, apparently, of his female 'Dal' contact. These experiences with the Dals lasted some two years – until, Meier says, their mission to Earth was complete. Then, until 1975, there was silence.

When the Pleiadeans came, there were three of them – Semjase, Ptaah and Asket – and two of them were distinctly female. They had much to tell him. Their home planet is called Erra, and it circles a small sun 'in the system of Taygeta' in the Pleiades cluster. However, this was not their original home: their civilisation had reached great heights on a planet of a star in the constellation of Lyra millions of years previously, but had been unable to cope with its own technological prowess. Before this society finally tore itself apart in a thermonuclear war, a Lyran named Pleione led a mass exodus into space to colonise planets in the Pleiades, in the Hyades cluster and on a planet of the star Vega. Once the colonists were safely established, space exploration was renewed – bringing the Pleiadeans in due course to our own solar system, which they first reached some thousands of years ago. The cosmonauts told Meier that they reckoned their civilisation was 3000 years in advance of ours on Earth and that 'our sector' of the Universe is governed by the 'Andromeda Council'. The Pleiadeans are also members of a union of planets whose inhabitants number 127 billion people – not superhumans 'but men, like us, benefiting from greater time, and greater knowledge'.

The Pleiades is a group of stars in the constellation of Taurus. To the naked eye it appears to be made up of six or seven stars.



Above: this is one of the Pleiadean spacecraft types that are capable of interstellar flight, according to Meier. This photograph, lacking ground features or other context, offers few clues to the sceptical analyst trying to judge its authenticity

Left: a Pleiadean spacecraft is just visible beyond Meier's moped in this shot. Time and again he would tour the countryside on the moped in response to strange impulses that were reliable signs of an imminent encounter with the Pleiadeans

The telescope reveals that these are part of a cluster of many hundreds of stars, 430 million light years distant from the Earth. How, then, did the cosmonauts ever reach us?

According to them, the journey takes about seven hours and is made in a variety of craft. The barrier posed by the speed of light is broken by a 'hyper-space drive system', and the ships equipped with it are known as 'beamships'. The hyper-space drive apparently works on a 'tachyon system' (tachyons are hypothetical faster-than-light particles). Propulsion below the speed of light is effected by a light-emitting drive. When pressed for more details the cosmonauts told Meier that terrestrial scientists were working on similar systems, known by other names but using the same principles. Five types of craft are used by the Pleiadeans, four of which have an interplanetary capacity – and one of these also has a time-travel mode. The fifth type of craft is used solely for sub-atmospheric reconnaissance.

So, what are the Pleiadeans doing here? And, perhaps a more intriguing question, why was it Billy Meier, a small-time farmer and one-time thief, that they chose to contact?

According to the cosmonauts, their purpose was quite simply to make us aware of the existence of extra-terrestrial life – which was both good and bad by earthly standards, and both human and non-human. Semjase, the elegant lady Pleiadean, put it like this in an early encounter: 'We, too, are still far removed from perfection and have to evolve constantly, just like yourselves. We are neither superior nor superhuman, nor are we missionaries. . . . We feel duty-bound to the citizens of Earth, because our forefathers were your forefathers.' Semjase did not reveal who those common ancestors were, nor was she entirely clear about the nature of the Pleiadean mission:

> We have taken on certain tasks, such as, for example, the supervision of developing life in space, particularly human, and to ensure a certain measure of order. In the course of these duties we do here and there approach the denizens of various worlds, select some individuals and instruct them. This we

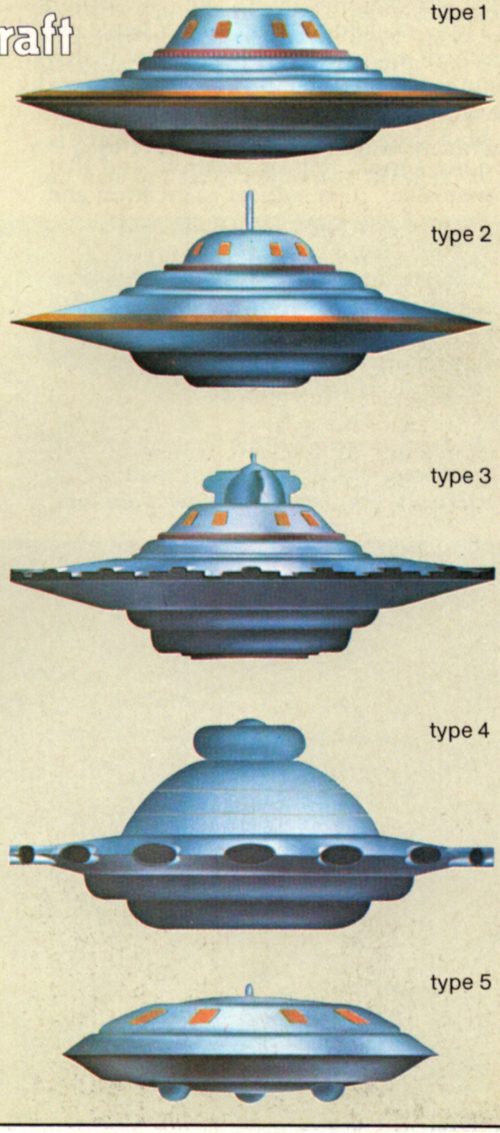
Below: Semjase, the lovely Pleiadean cosmonaut, had no difficulty, apparently, in communicating with Meier. She and her fellow space travellers were telepathic, and understood his questions before he spoke. Nevertheless, their replies to him were spoken, and were in an oddly accented dialect of Swiss-German

The Pleiadean spacecraft

Billy Meier's photographs show five different types of alleged spacecraft, the functions of which were described to him by Semjase. The first four can travel across interstellar distances by means of a device that transports ship and crew 'in a twinkling of an eye through uncounted light years of distance as we understand it'. A second propulsion system permits travel below the speed of light in the neighbourhood of planets. Artificial gravity can be provided. These craft are 23 feet (7 metres) in diameter, and can be crewed by up to seven cosmonauts, though the usual number is three. Semjase explained that 'our spaceships are protected by a screen of energy which automatically rejects any kind of resistance and every bit of matter. . . .' Interstellar flight calls for transitions through higher dimensions: 'If a spaceship breaks through the barrier of light velocity without reaching hyper-space instantly, a catastrophe is due for ship and crew.'

The fifth type of craft is made in two versions, 12 feet (3.5 metres) and 16 feet (5 metres) in diameter respectively. Used to gather data, they are normally remotely controlled, though the larger models can carry one person. They can be used only in planetary atmospheres.

Pleiadean spacecraft are constantly being developed and improved. Type 1 was superseded after centuries of use because of 'radiation leakage problems'.



do only when a race is in a stage of higher evolution. Then we explain (and prove) to them that they are not the only thinking beings in the universe.

The Pleiadeans, however, in common with other aliens who have purportedly communicated with people on Earth, are not greatly impressed with the way we are managing our affairs. In the course of their contacts they let it be known to Meier that

in their opinion, we terrestrials were not capable of changing mass consciousness, that we were an insane society rushing headlong to our own destruction, that we were not only content with exterminating each other, but we now are bent on destroying all forms of life on this planet as well as the critical life support systems.

Such a state of affairs once pertained when the Pleiadeans inhabited their home system in Lyra, of course: but unlike them, we do not take our world crisis seriously, and no one has made suitable preparations for escape from our doomed planet. Even so, the Pleiadeans refuse to interfere with our way of life or our power structure. We, and we alone, are responsible for our own destiny.

This Zen-like combination of fierce moral comment and studied indifference is driven home by various quasi-mystical utterances by the cosmonauts. Some examples:

Man should know that the God force is quite simply that of creation, and that man also . . . is subject to creation and respectively complementary to it.

Material life on Earth is only a passing event, a phenomenon vanishing after a time. However, before him and after him there continues to exist the creative presence of the universe.

When the spirit, this universal self, manifests itself in the human being through constant love, wisdom and truth, then a major breakthrough occurs in the surrounding self-veils which eliminates the physical-material urge of greed, anger, hate, avarice, war. . . .

Above: a fleet of spaceships photographed by Meier in February 1975. He claims to have witnessed them making occasional instantaneous 'jumps' from place to place

Below: a swirl of grass said to have been formed by a spacecraft's landing gear

And neither is it consistent with the truth that our brothers and sisters come from other parts of space on behalf of a God to bring to the world the long-awaited peace. In no case do we come on behalf of anybody, since creation, by itself, confers no obligation. It is a law unto itself, and every form of life must conform with it and become a part of it.

Thus spoke Semjase, Pleiadean cosmonaut, to Billy Meier during 1975.

But why was it Meier that was chosen? Wendelle Stevens believes he knows the answer: 'They told him that they had been in contact with him before in other lifetimes.' Such an idea might, of course, occur to someone who had spent two years listening to the kind of conversation that takes place daily in an ashram. But Meier's belief is a little more elaborate, according to Stevens's testimony:

They said that their ancestors had contacted him during prior incarnations on Earth. They told him that he was one of them who had been caught in an Earth evolution by his own choice several thousand years ago. Since his

> soul patterns were more akin to them it was registered in their computers. Supposedly, they could find him wherever he was. As he was one of them and familiar with their mission, his soul could understand ideas communicated to him better than our souls could.

The Pleiadean computer, it will be noted, is obviously a remarkable piece of machinery, able to record 'soul patterns'. But then, it is not clear how material the cosmonauts are themselves. The delectable Semjase told Meier that when coming to Earth the Pleiadeans 'are forced into making a "slight adjustment" which allows us to function properly within your dimensional world'. Without such an 'adjustment', no extra-terrestrial could make contact with people on Earth. It ensures 'a correct state of mind and corresponds with the human vibrational pattern'.

This may (or may not) have something to do with the high level of spiritual development claimed by the Pleiadeans. Using their telepathic powers, they are apparently able to think in concert, 'exercising their astute powers of purity of thought' to control their tendencies to discord and strife. Thus freed from bickering, their technology has flourished and so has their medicine, giving the Pleiadeans an average life expectancy of 1000 years.

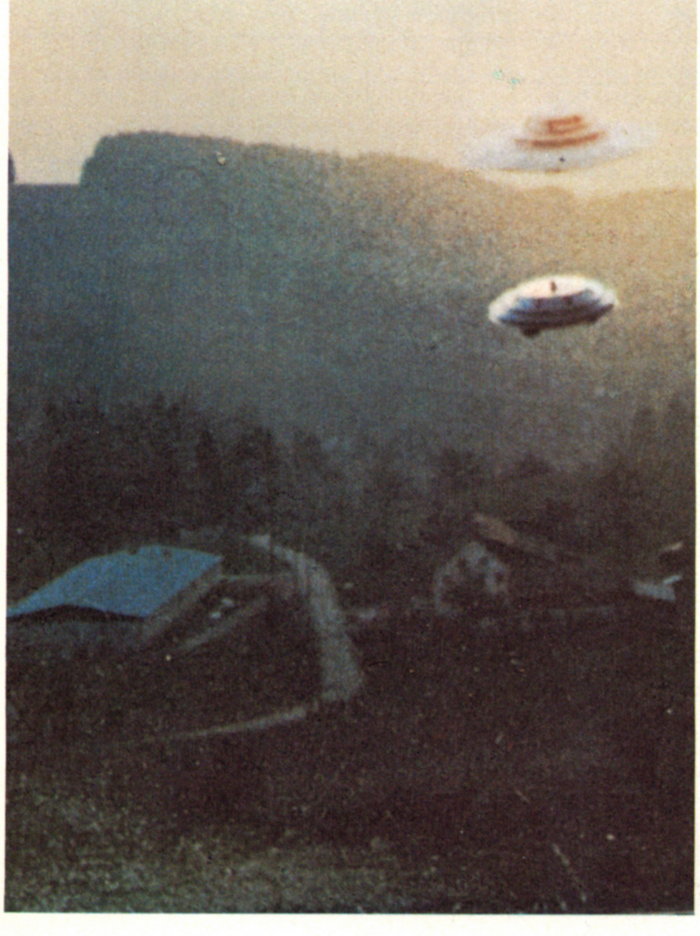
Despite these talents, Meier observed, the cosmonauts spoke in an oddly accented form of Swiss-German. The remarkable nature of the Pleiadean computer is seemingly responsible, as Semjase explained:

> We are in possession of all Earth languages which are spoken at the moment or have ever been spoken in past ages. We have exact data on them from which we have developed language courses. This happens through computer-like apparatus under the supervision of language experts. . . . Other types of apparatus may serve to connect us to the 'computer' in such a way to make it virtually possible for the languages to be inspired into us. . . .

Such a process, it seems, is still unable to induce a perfect accent.

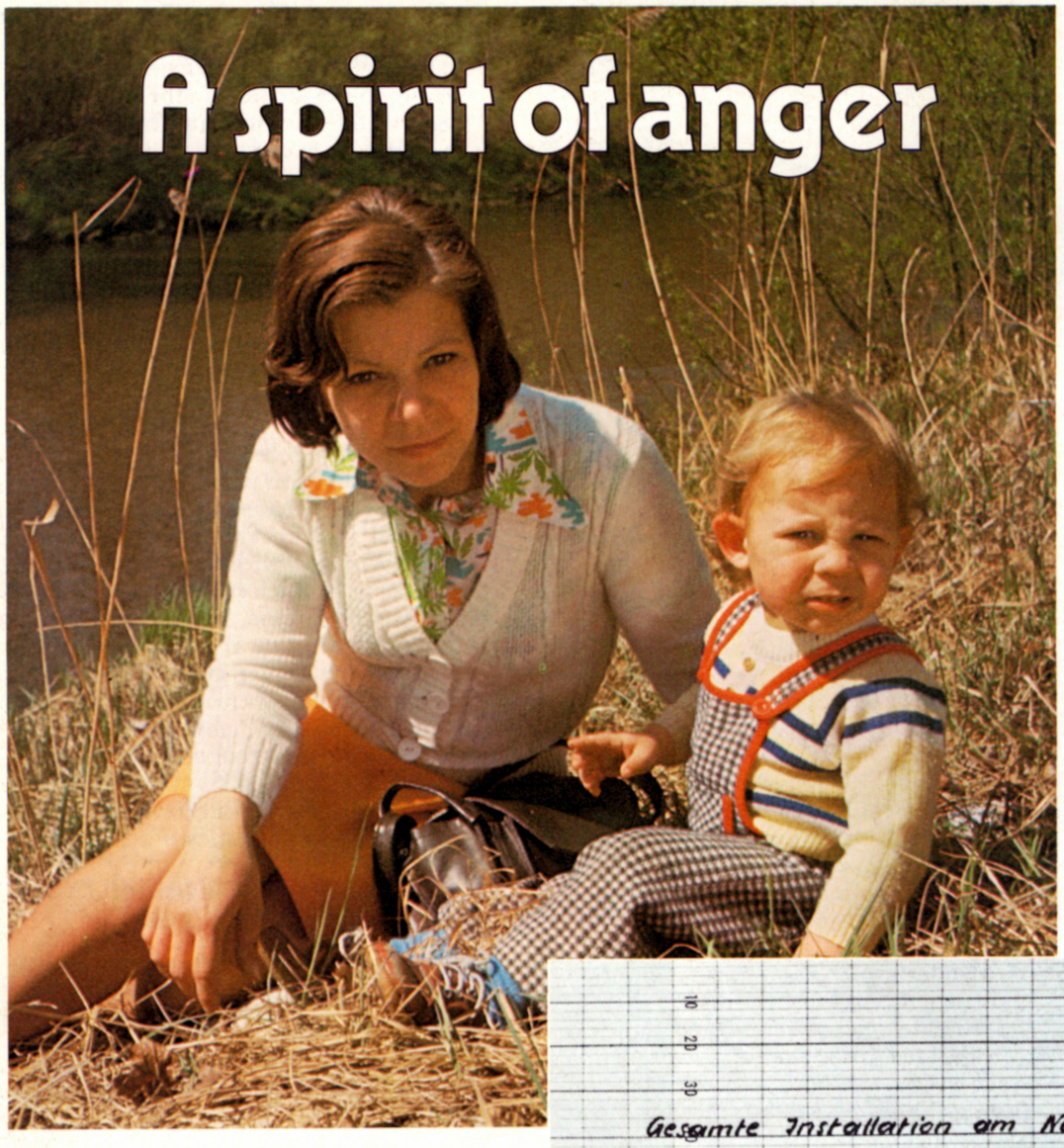
And the question is still unresolved as to quite what the Pleiadeans expected Meier to *do* with all this information – unless they foresaw his contact with Colonel Stevens and the resulting publicity. Once familiar with the outlines of the case, Stevens certainly lost no time in gathering the evidence: photographs, metal samples given Meier by the cosmonauts, physical traces of the landings, film, tape recordings, computer analysis of pictures, statements from other witnesses, all gathered in a total of 62 days spent with Meier in Switzerland. But what is the significance of that investigation?

On page 1590: how Stevens evaluated Meier – and how ufologists evaluated Stevens



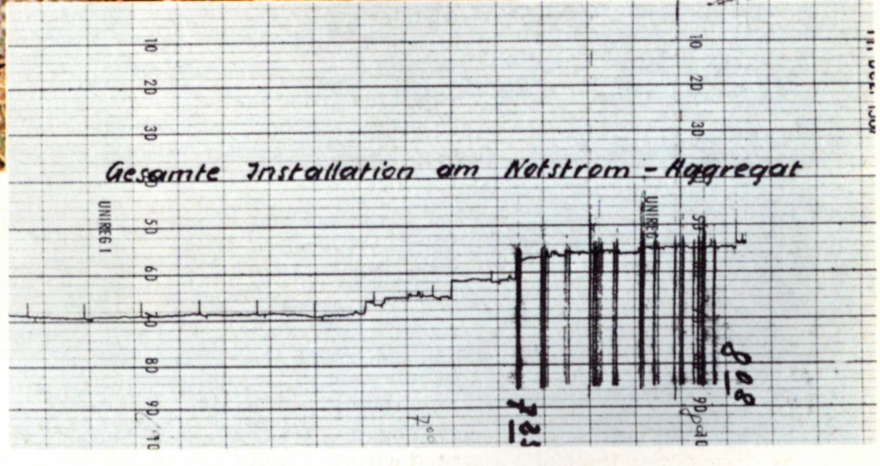
UFOs in the sunset. Two photographs taken within a short time of each other, showing 'spacecraft' of two different types manoeuvring over Meier's farm, visible in the background (below left). To seasoned ufologists, pictures as spectacular as this seem 'too good to be true', but Colonel Wendelle Stevens rapidly became convinced of their authenticity and has staunchly defended them

A spirit of anger



Left: Annemarie Schneider, centre of the Rosenheim poltergeist phenomenon, photographed with her young son at the time of the BBC investigation in April 1975

Below: a portion of the Unireg pen trace showing violent deflections beginning around 7.30 a.m. – the hour when Annemarie reported for work



Teams of investigators were mystified by the weird events at the Rosenheim lawyer's office. At length they began to suspect that the happenings were centred on a member of the office staff – but who was it? COLIN GODMAN and LINDSAY ST CLAIRE report

AS THE PARANORMAL EVENTS in Herr Adam's office continued, work became increasingly difficult. The army of investigators and reporters who were constantly present did not make things any better, and the staff, who felt they were under continuous scrutiny, became tense and nervous. It was bad enough to have to cope with the poltergeist phenomena that continually interrupted their work, but they also had to cope with mutual suspicion each time something happened. A typical event occurred on 12 December, when Johannes Engelhard, the office manager, was opening the morning post with a knife. Frau Adam called to him from the next room, and, as he walked to the door, he heard a picture fall somewhere behind him. He spun round to see the painting lying on the floor. But that was not all. Neatly stacked on it were the letters he had been opening, together with the knife. Although the two clerks were in the office, they could not have touched the letters or the picture in the moment it took for Engelhard to turn round. All the same, he could not help suspecting that they had played a trick on him.

Soon, however, suspicion began to centre on Annemarie Schneider. She appeared to be the most tense of the office staff, and she twitched strangely whenever poltergeist activity took place. The Unireg record, which

had shown deflections only in office hours, was checked closely, and it was found that events began at 7.30 a.m. – the time that Annemarie reported for work. Hans Bender's team from the Freiburg Institute had discreetly centred investigations on her for some time. One day, one of Bender's assistants noticed a lamp swinging strangely as Annemarie walked along the corridor underneath it. It had already been decided that each of the office staff would take a short holiday, since things had been so trying. This would also enable the research team to check who, if anyone, was responsible for the phenomena. Annemarie was given first leave – and, sure enough, the office was peaceful again.

Above: the desks at which the two girl clerks in Herr Adam's office, Gustel Huber and Annemarie Schneider, worked

Below: on the afternoon of 17 January 1967 this oak cabinet, which weighs over 400 pounds (180 kilograms), moved a distance of more than a foot (30 centimetres)

Screaming and sobbing

When Annemarie returned to work on 18 December, she seemed even more tense than before, and screamed out when a lamp began to swing. The phenomena had returned with her – and with renewed intensity. Pictures swung merrily, dropping to the floor with a force that dismantled their frames, but left their glass intact. Pages flew off the calendar, and light bulbs exploded. Drawers slid out of desks, and Frau Bielmeier had to wedge one shut with a stool weighted by a typewriter. Annemarie grew more tense every day, screaming and sobbing when phenomena occurred close to her. Fortunately, the Christmas holidays arrived.

Work at the office recommenced on 1 January 1968. When everything had been normal for over a week, Adam began to hope that he was no longer Rosenheim's principal consumer of light bulbs and fluorescent tubes – until 10.30 a.m. on 9 January, when Annemarie returned.

As before, the phenomena returned with Annemarie, and as before, they had grown still more violent. Annemarie received an electric shock in her leg as she picked a picture up off the floor, and Frau Bielmeier had a cracking sensation in her ear.

The climax was reached on 17 January. With only Annemarie and Frau Adam in the office, a number of light bulbs exploded. Annemarie was so frightened that she ran upstairs to the dental surgery, where Herr Geistaller, the dentist, managed to calm her down. Later, the police came to photograph the damage. Annemarie was back at her desk, typing, when the calendar fell from the wall and desk drawers slid out. Suddenly, a metal cash box jumped out of a drawer and clattered to the floor, spilling coins and stamps everywhere. The police, who also believed Annemarie was somehow at the centre of the phenomena, began to keep a closer watch on her.

Officer Wendl was in charge of the police investigation, and he was eager to solve the case. His belief that he would eventually catch Annemarie moving objects physically was shaken that afternoon when a heavy oak cabinet moved a foot (30 centimetres). The cabinet weighed over 400 pounds (180 kilograms), and Wendl realised that, even using levers or with the help of Fräulein Huber, Annemarie could not have moved it. It had been lifted clear over the edge of the linoleum, which would have puckered had the cabinet been shoved, and it took the efforts of two burly policemen to restore it to its place. Had the cabinet episode not occurred, Wendl would have felt sure that he had proved his case, but now he doubted it. He

was beginning to think, along with the scientists, that the ordinary laws of physics did not apply in the office, but as an extra check he organised a search for tools. None was found.

At 4.30 the same afternoon, Frau Adam arrived at the police station to inform Wendl that the cabinet had moved again. He and Officer Tischler accompanied her back to the office, which they found in chaos. The girls were almost hysterical because they had been getting electric shocks in their arms and legs all day, and before the second movement of the cabinet, tables and chairs had moved. One table had jerked along with a horrified visitor perched on it. When Frau Bielmeier left the typing room, her chair had risen, and Annemarie and Fräulein Huber's chairs both sunk. The height of the typing chairs is adjusted with a ratchet that, to prevent accidents, cannot be altered when any weight is on the seat – yet that afternoon, Professor Büchel of the Physics Institute at Pulach, near Munich, had watched Annemarie's chair descend while she was still sitting on it. She was shocked; her face blanched, then strange red patches appeared on her skin. That day, she was given further leave of absence. As she left, she noted sadly in a diary she had been asked to keep by Hans Bender: '18 January. As from today, I am on the sicklist. . . . I hope everything will proceed quickly so I can have my rest at last.'

Herr Adam lost no time. Annemarie was dismissed, and never returned to the Königstrasse office – and neither did the strange phenomena. During the poltergeist activity, the cost of the damage had amounted to 15,000 Deutschmarks, which the unfortunate Adam was obliged to pay.

Hans Bender took the opportunity of asking Annemarie to visit his Freiburg Institute so that he could do some laboratory tests and, after initial reluctance to leave home, she agreed to spend from 21 to 26 January 1968 there. A team of scientists duplicated the circuits and equipment of Adam's office, hoping to reproduce the poltergeist effects, but none of the deflections or other phenomena occurred. It seems that Annemarie could produce paranormal events only in certain specific circumstances.

Abandoning the attempt to reproduce psychokinesis, Bender tried testing Annemarie's ESP abilities. Again, nothing significant was discovered – except momentarily, when Annemarie scored highly while upset by an unpleasant memory. This seemed to confirm that stress encouraged paranormal events in her case.

Stress and frustration were seen to play a major role in Annemarie's personality. During her stay at Freiburg, she underwent extensive psychological assessment by a psychologist colleague of Bender, John Mischo. He concluded that she was unstable, irritable and suffering from frustrated rages.

Below: the bowling alley in Raubling, on the outskirts of Rosenheim. Annemarie used to go bowling here with her fiancé – but, after an incident in the summer of 1969 in which she apparently disrupted the electronically controlled bowling system, her fiancé broke off the engagement

Above left: Hans Bender and a colleague inspect the fluorescent light fittings that spontaneously unscrewed themselves while Annemarie Schneider was present in the office

Left: Annemarie inspects a pen trace during tests conducted by Hans Bender at the Freiburg Institute in January 1968. The results of the tests, in the sympathetic surroundings of the Institute, were disappointing: it seems that, to produce paranormal events, Annemarie had to be in a condition of stress

She was unable to tolerate denial and was aggressive, although she suppressed her aggression. He believed that her constant frustrations discharged themselves through psychokinesis, via a process yet to be explained. Her own doctor had remarked on the severity of her nervous symptoms, which included hyperaemia (an excess of blood gathering in one place) and cramps. Her cramp attacks always followed the same pattern: she would cry out, and her eyes would glaze as the cramp spread. Her hands and feet would be worst affected, fingers and toes stretched painfully rigid. Muscles in her knees and hips would also flex agonisingly.

Professor Bender looked for psychological motives for the phenomena. He felt that the speaking clock was contacted as a result of Annemarie's constant desire to know when she could leave the office. Furthermore, it seems as if the damage in the office could have been prompted by aggression towards Herr Adam, as Annemarie had felt particularly tense in his office and had disliked being in his employment. Apparently, early on in the sequence of phenomena, Adam had sarcastically said: 'All we want now is for the paintings to start moving.' Annemarie was within earshot – and, moments later, the first painting started to move.

A subsequent incident confirmed, according to Bender, that Annemarie seemed to instigate psychokinesis in response to emotional problems. She seemed to Bender to be subconsciously trying to rid herself of her fiancé who, appropriately enough, was an electrical engineer. They used to go bowling together in a small alley in Raubling, a suburb on the outskirts of Rosenheim. Bowls are returned automatically, and the pins are attached to cords controlled by a system of relays that replaces them when they are knocked over. Scores are displayed on an illuminated score board.

Annemarie continues the story:

> We had been engaged for three years and once a week we went bowling. On one occasion, the relays behaved in an eccentric way and the bowling was spoiled. I was told the relays had been put out of action, I don't know what they were talking about. My fiancé took the whole thing much too seriously and said that under the circumstances, marriage would be quite impossible.

This happened in the summer of 1969. Whatever the scientists' belief about Annemarie's subconscious wishes, she took several years to get over her broken engagement. She felt victimised, since there had been nothing to prove that the failure of the bowling mechanism was anything whatsoever to do with her.

Blamed for a death

The final stage of the BBC investigation was to talk to Annemarie herself. We met her in April 1975. She turned out to be a stout, plain girl with a sad, prematurely aged face. She told us that after leaving Adam's office, she had been employed by another solicitor, Weinzier. Stories of her ability to move lamps and produce other phenomena followed her. This was the first in a long series of jobs, since the unfortunate Annemarie would always be dismissed if anything odd occurred. 'I never had influence over anything. I was very hurt indeed.' Her Bavarian colleagues still had medieval superstitions and apparently whispered that she was a witch.

She went on: 'I worked in Regenfelchen in a paper factory, and there was an accident there when a man was killed. The workers who knew who I was said, "That woman is responsible for the man's death." They didn't give me the sack from the factory immediately, they just dropped hints, so I left on my own accord. I wasn't even in the factory when it happened.'

Since that highly dubious case, there have been no new reports of paranormal happenings associated with Annemarie. She has moved to Munich where, in the anonymous surroundings of a big city, her reputation for producing psychokinetic effects has not been able to catch up with her to plague her. And perhaps this has something to do with the fact that she apparently no longer produces these effects: for, unlike most paranormal phenomena, these seemed actually to be encouraged by attention from scientists and the media. Hans Bender has pointed out that this most remarkable of cases was observed over a period of several months by more than 40 witnesses from widely ranging walks of life – office workers, electrical engineers, lawyers, scientists, psychologists and the police. For all the documentary evidence, however, *how* Annemarie produced the phenomena remains as much a mystery to scientists as ever it was.

Psi: the secret agent

Are psychic events a common, but concealed, part of everyday life? And, if so, how can they be investigated? JULIAN ISAACS explains how American researcher Rex G. Stanford found answers to these questions

RELATIVELY FEW PEOPLE claim to have had psychic experiences, even fewer to be gifted psychically. But there is a quiet revolution in progress within parapsychology that may radically alter this idea of the rarity of psychic happenings in everyday life. The research involved has shown not only that psychic functioning is much more common than was imagined, but also that it is possible to devise a model on the basis of which themes underlying spontaneous psi may be tested in the laboratory.

The new model of psychic functioning was created by American parapsychologist Rex G. Stanford in 1974. However, the news seems not to have spread beyond parapsychological circles, perhaps because of the model's uncompromisingly technical title – 'psi-mediated instrumental response' – and its more commonly used acronym – PMIR. Yet for all its smokescreen of jargon and its academic obscurity the new model of how ordinary people operate psychically in everyday situations is relevant to everyone, parapsychologist and layman, who is seeking to understand the psychic realm. For PMIR translated into understandable terms is 'helping oneself through psychically influenced behaviour'.

Above: Rex G. Stanford, who discovered PMIR

Below: ESP tests were most successful when targets were accompanied by erotic cards

Self-centred psi

The two main features implicit in the PMIR model are, first, that one usually does something ultimately to benefit oneself and, secondly, that this self-serving activity involves behaviour that has a psychic component. This behaviour can be of various sorts: it can be purely psychic, such as influencing one's surroundings directly by psychokinesis (PK), it can involve influencing the actions of others, or very commonly receiving information through ESP and benefiting from it. People can exhibit all these forms of PMIR behaviour without being aware that they are doing anything psychic whatsoever. This is, by implication, startling; it means that a person's behaviour may demonstrate that he has detected some useful fact or situation through ESP alone – but his experience of the 'real world' leads him to deny the possibility that anything paranormal is responsible.

To establish this point – which is crucial to the PMIR model – evidence must be collected to show that people actually do demonstrate PK or ESP in ways useful to themselves, without the least idea that they

Left: Mrs Jones, who has a gift for being appropriately dressed on every occasion, tried on her 'wedding' hat one day and remarked that it was a long time since she had been to a wedding. The next day her daughter turned up, announcing that she had just become engaged. Mrs Jones wore that same hat to the wedding. PMIR most often works through our everyday motivations – in this case Mrs Jones's preoccupation with suitable dressing

are doing so. This type of effect, which is known as 'non-intentional psi', might seem impossible to research, yet there is an extensive literature dealing with this very subject.

In the laboratory, ESP tests have been camouflaged so that they appear to be normal academic examinations, or what have appeared to be tests of memory have in fact masked tests of ESP. And students without knowing it have scored significantly on the ESP tests. Such experiments show that non-intentional psi is not only possible, but common.

For example, an ESP test was conducted with some American students in 1974 where they had to describe Zener cards that were concealed in opaque sealed envelopes. This, however, was only the intentional ESP task; in fact it acted as a cover for the non-intentional task. Unknown to any of the students, some of the envelopes contained erotic photographs of women as well as the Zener cards. Male college students were found to have scored significantly higher on the ESP cards that were accompanied by the erotic photographs, whereas female college students showed no such bias. When the experiment was repeated with younger pupils the more anxious subjects tended to miss scoring on the targets with the erotic photographs to a statistically significant extent.

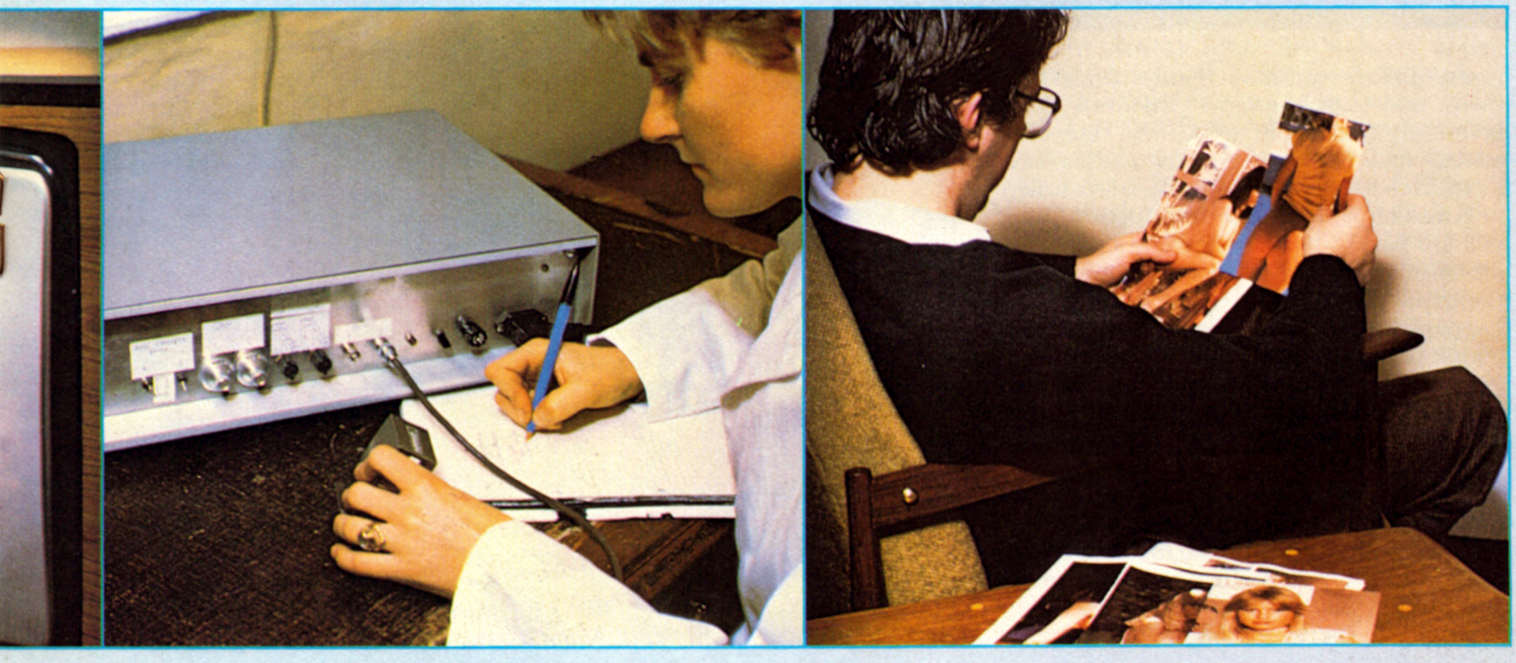
No sex, please

This demonstrates two points: one is that people can, and do, behave in a way that is clearly influenced by their receiving information through ESP of which they are consciously unaware, and the second is that the response they make to this information is characteristic of their normal interests and concerns. The female college students showed little reaction to the envelopes containing erotic targets, just as research has shown that girls are much less likely to buy erotic books or magazines than boys. The boys, on the other hand, reacted to the erotic targets much as they would in normal circumstances. It is also consistent with the normal behaviour of the younger pupils that the anxious children should react by avoiding the disturbingly erotic pictures.

Another example of the way in which PMIR behaviour reflects a person's normal interests has a real life setting, rather than a rigidly controlled laboratory one, so that coincidence cannot be ruled out as an explanation. It concerns a rather psychic lady, Mrs Jones, who is unusually well-dressed and possesses a considerable flair for being appropriately dressed for every occasion.

One day she felt moved to sort out a cupboard that she had not thought of for some months. While tidying it she came across several of her hats. Picking out one that was suitable for a wedding she put it on, remarking to her husband that it was a long time since they had attended one. She tried

Below: in one American experiment designed to show the existence of hidden ESP, students were given the deliberately boring task of predicting the path of a randomly moving light with a light pen (left). Meanwhile in the next room a female assistant monitored a random event generator – REG – that was acting as a sort of electronic coin tosser (centre); when the REG scored the equivalent of seven heads or tails the students were released from their boring task and allowed to sort pictures of scantily clad women (right). Only about three students should have 'escaped' by chance alone; in fact eight did. It seemed that somehow the students had affected the REG by psychic means



on no other hat. The next day, to her complete surprise, her daughter announced that she had just become engaged. Mrs Jones wore that hat to her daughter's wedding.

Some months later she was looking through her clothes cupboard when, for no apparent reason, her black skirt, which she had not worn for some time (and which was the only piece of black clothing she possessed), caught her eye. She decided to try it on to see if it still fitted and was pleased to see that it did. She tried on no other item of clothing. The next day news arrived of her mother's sudden death. Mrs Jones wore that black skirt to the funeral.

Even if these two incidents are coincidences they are particularly meaningful ones for Mrs Jones: her uncanny knack of encountering the appropriate clothes for the events of the immediate future is strikingly consistent with her everyday motivation to be appropriately dressed on every occasion.

Parapsychologists can now look at real life cases, deduce common themes underlying them, and then construct situations in the laboratory that allow them to be rigorously tested, and enable the odds against such 'coincidences' to be calculated statistically.

A teacher's lawnmower refused to start every summer just when he had a stack of examination papers to mark – and his wife wanted him to mow the lawn. The paranormal nature of this 'coincidental' escape route became clear when the teacher discovered he was a metal bender. Judging by Stanford's research it seems that many people use PK or ESP, perhaps unknown to themselves, to bring about what they want

An example of this is the situation where you are faced with having to do a particular job that you really do not want to do and then, just before you begin it, something happens that frees you from the task. Many people must have had this experience and not given it a second thought.

A laboratory copy of this situation was set up using 40 male college students. They were given the following task, which was presented as a standard psychological experiment and which was deliberately made as boring as possible. They had to follow, with a light pen, the path of a randomly moving spot of light that was shown on a translucent screen, and try to predict the direction it would take, using the light pen as a pointer. But meanwhile, unknown to them, a two-state random event generator (REG) was operating: equivalent to someone tossing a coin, the REG had an equal probability of registering one of two states. The REG was monitored by an experimental assistant who, if she noted seven consecutive occurrences of the same state, would release the subject of the experiment from his boring task and give him the job of sorting pictures of scantily clad women in order of attractiveness. None of the subjects knew before starting the task that there was any hope of escaping it, nor what reward their 'release' would bring; the only possible link between the subjects and the events generated by the REG was their subconscious mind. Of the 40 subjects, Stanford claimed, about three should have escaped by pure chance. In fact, eight did.

Lazy days of summer

This type of study indicates that ESP and PK can be jointly pressed into the service of individual desires. In my own research with people who can bend metal paranormally, many of them seem to use their PK abilities unconsciously to get what they want. One teacher in a Midlands technical college found that every summer, just as he began to be very busy marking examination papers and did not want to be distracted, his lawnmower would mysteriously refuse to start. His wife's pleas that he mow the lawn could therefore be justifiably refused on the grounds that the lawnmower was broken. In this case the PK-generated 'escape route' from the resented task was not suspected by the agent until he was discovered to be a metal bender and was asked if any domestic equipment had ever regularly malfunctioned in his vicinity. (The answer to this question has been found to be a useful indicator of hidden PK abilities.) Sometimes causing equipment to malfunction in this way can have very dramatic, even lifesaving, consequences:

A letter to the correspondence column of *The Sun* in the late 1970s related the story of a disabled driver of an invalid carriage. Normally reliable, the engine stalled for no apparent reason at a set of traffic lights while waiting for the green light. When the lights changed, the invalid carriage still refused to start, despite the driver's every effort. Then, a few seconds after the lights turned green, a heavy lorry shot through the red lights coming straight for where the invalid carriage would have been had its engine been functioning normally.

The 'mysterious' breakdown of machinery is arguably less mysterious if seen as a feature of the PMIR model – using PK to save oneself, even if one is not aware of it at the time. But one can learn to become aware of PMIR – and to reap the rewards.

How far does the PMIR model explain some people's runs of 'luck'? See page 1618

Poltergeist on trial

When investigators were called in to examine the 'ghost' of Cock Lane, they devised a test to establish once and for all who or what lay behind it. FRANK SMYTH concludes his account of the case of 'Scratching Fanny'

Shops and taverns in the Cock Lane area did a roaring trade as a result of the activity at Richard Parsons's home, which daily drew crowds of sightseers to the street. Only the Parsons family, it seems, failed to profit from the phenomena

RICHARD PARSONS was becoming seriously alarmed by the mysterious noises at his home in Cock Lane. The strange rappings had continued for several months and no natural explanation could be found for them. Then, almost at his wits' end, Parsons asked the Reverend John Moore to investigate, to see if some paranormal agency were the cause.

Moore was a follower of John Wesley, who was himself no stranger to the supernatural. In 1715 Wesley's family home had been troubled by a 'knocking spirit', and his father, the Reverend Samuel Wesley, had 'communicated' with it by knocking back. Moore, told of Parsons's theories as to the origin of the phenomena – he now believed that the ghost of the newly dead Fanny Kent was responsible – began holding seances, using one knock for yes, and two for no, in order to find out the 'spirit's' wishes. The Wesley ghost had centred itself upon Hetty Wesley, John's younger sister, and the Cock Lane ghost now orientated itself upon the person of 11-year-old Elizabeth Parsons.

Moore's most productive sessions were held in Elizabeth's bedroom, after the girl had been put to bed. Sometimes the knocks came from the floorboards, sometimes from the bedstead or the walls. On the rare occasions when the 'spirit' appeared to be pleased, it made a noise like the fluttering of wings; when displeased it made a noise like 'a cat's claws scratching over a cane chair' – and it became known as 'Scratching Fanny'.

A demand for justice

Its message was brutally blunt. It was the ghost of Fanny Kent, murdered by William, who had poisoned her purl – a concoction of bitter herbs in ale popularly used as a restorative – about two hours before she died. Fanny wanted justice.

William Kent, slowly recovering from his bereavement, had set himself up as a stockbroker and busied himself in the City, and it was not until almost a year after Fanny's death, in January 1761, that he heard of the continuing saga of Cock Lane through a series of articles in the *Public Ledger* news sheet. Terrified by the 'ghost's' accusations – which were now, of course, public knowledge – he called on the Reverend Moore. Moore was impressed by Kent's manner and bearing, but assured him that 'there were very strange noises of knockings and scratchings every night, and that there was something behind darker than all the rest.'

As a result of their meeting, Kent went to Cock Lane to sit in on a seance himself. To his horror the knocks accused him personally of having killed Fanny with arsenic, and when he asked, at Moore's instigation, whether he would be hanged, the answer was a single knock.

'Thou art a lying spirit,' he shouted. 'Thou art not the ghost of my Fanny. She would never have said any such thing.'

By this time the ghost of 'Scratching

Fanny' had become a matter of enormous public interest, and crowds on foot and in carriages flocked to watch the comings and goings at the house. Horace Walpole wrote: 'Provisions are sent in like forage, and all the taverns and ale houses in the neighbourhood make fortunes.' To the credit of the Parsons family, however, none of them seems to have made any money from the phenomena.

As the year went on, so the seances continued. On one occasion, one of the sitters, William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth and himself a Methodist, decided to have Elizabeth Parsons moved to the house of a gentleman named Bray, just to see what would happen. The knockings accompanied her, seeming to show that she, and not the actual Cock Lane premises, was the catalyst. But the girl was watched closely, women attendants holding her hands and feet to rule out fraud, and still the noises went on.

The proceedings had taken on the atmosphere of a kangaroo court, with the doctor and apothecary who had attended Fanny Kent in her last illness denying that Kent could have poisoned her – she had drunk only their preparation in the 50 hours before her death – and the knocking contradicting them. The maid servant 'Carrots' Carlisle was implicated also, and indignantly shouted at the 'spirit': 'Then I am sure, Madam, you may be ashamed of yourself, for I never hurt you in my life.'

Elizabeth Parsons herself had begun to have epileptic fits. She claimed to have actually seen the ghost, 'in a shroud and without hands', but claimed that the only aspect of the matter that frightened her was 'what would become of her Daddy . . . if their matter should be supposed to be an imposture.'

William Kent was naturally anxious to clear up the matter; Moore, convinced that the ghost was telling the truth, was also eager for the authorities to act, but the only person in the City of London with the power to order a full investigation was the Lord Mayor, Sir Samuel Fludyer. He 'did not choose to stir much, for it was somewhat like Canning's affair', which had caused trouble for his predecessor (see page 1558), and he refused to order the arrest of either Kent – for suspected murder – or Parsons – for fraud. Instead, he insisted that an independent investigation should be held at the house of the Reverend Stephen Aldrich, vicar of St John's, Clerkenwell.

Aldrich, to make sure that the investigation would be impartial, formed a committee with Lord Dartmouth. They chose Dr John Douglas, an amateur investigator who had exposed a number of frauds, Mrs Oakes, a hospital matron, Dr George Macaulay, a society physician, two or three gentlemen and Dr Samuel Johnson.

Johnson had long been fascinated by ghosts. The idea of total oblivion after death horrified him. He summed up his attitude to his biographer James Boswell: '. . . still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death. All argument is against it; but all belief is for it.'

But he undertook to assist in the investigation of 'Scratching Fanny' for a typically humanitarian reason. If the affair was a fraud, it was seriously damaging the reputation of William Kent, who seemed an honest and decent man.

The 'Committee of Gentlemen', as the newspapers termed it, decided on a new course of action. They arranged to test Elizabeth Parsons at Aldrich's house, and then, leaving her behind, they would descend to the vault of St John's, where the ghost would knock on Fanny Kent's coffin to 'prove' its objective existence. A preliminary seance was held, and the ghost agreed to these conditions.

Above: Dr Samuel Johnson (left) with Oliver Goldsmith (centre). Johnson was one of the 'Committee of Gentlemen' formed by the vicar of St John's, Clerkenwell, and William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth (below), to investigate the Cock Lane affair and William Kent's role in it. The committee's findings – that no supernatural agency was involved – led to the publication of a pamphlet, generally believed to be the work of Oliver Goldsmith, which argued forcefully that Kent was innocent of all charges against him

The test begins

On the evening of 1 February 1762, Elizabeth was put to bed at Aldrich's house, attended by the matron, Mrs Oakes, and other women. According to Dr Johnson's report, the child said that she could feel the spirit 'like a mouse upon her back [but] no evidence of any preternatural power was exhibited'.

The committee then made its way to St John's, entered the vault, and called upon the spirit to keep its promise by knocking on the coffin. 'But nothing more than silence ensued. . . . It is therefore the opinion of the whole assembly that the child has some art of making or counterfeiting particular noises, and that there is no agency of a higher cause.'

One or two more seances followed, but the affair was nearing its end. On 3 February, a large gathering saw a curtain rod spin violently of its own volition, and heard a knocking of such violence, high up in the chimney, 'that they thought it would have broke it all to pieces'. Finally, Elizabeth was told that she had only one more night, 21 February, to prove her innocence, 'otherwise she and her

Above: St John's Church, Clerkenwell, where Fanny Kent was laid to rest in 1760. Although the investigating committee had, by implication, exonerated William Kent from the charge of Fanny's murder, the case was not closed. When the coffin was opened 90 years later, the corpse was found to be perfectly preserved – which, to modern forensic scientists, would suggest death by arsenic poisoning. So, was Fanny Kent murdered? And, if so, by whom? And why?

Left: John Wesley, whose family also experienced a 'knocking spirit', which centred on Wesley's younger sister – just as that at Cock Lane focused on 11-year-old Elizabeth Parsons. In the 18th century such disturbances were believed to be evil in nature; today they are recognised as classic symptoms of poltergeist activity

father and mother would all be sent to Newgate.'

This final session was held at the house of a gentleman named Missiter in Covent Garden and this time, perhaps not unexpectedly, there were positive results. The child was seen creeping from her bed to pick up a piece of wood with which she subsequently made knocking sounds. But Missiter and his companions agreed that this blatant piece of fraud produced sounds nothing like the ones heard previously: Elizabeth was, naturally, terrified for her freedom.

The tide had turned in Kent's favour. On 5 March a pamphlet entitled 'The mystery revealed', usually attributed to Oliver Goldsmith, put the case for his innocence with force. Later, Charles Churchill published a long poem, *The ghost*, which laughed at the affair – particularly Dr Johnson's part in it – and David Garrick turned the saga of 'Scratching Fanny' to good use by making it the centrepiece of a comic recitation, 'The Farmer's Return', at Drury Lane theatre.

On 9 February a new knocking ghost was advertised as 'likely to perform' in Broad Court, Covent Garden. The magistrate at nearby Bow Street was John Fielding, the half brother of Henry Fielding, and he sent the 'ghost' his compliments 'with an intimation that it would not meet with the lenity the Cock Lane spirit did, but that it should knock hemp in Bridewell. On which the ghost, very discreetly, omitted the intended exhibition.'

On 10 July, the 'conspirators' were brought for trial at the Court of King's Bench, Guildhall, before Lord Mansfield. The charge was that the Reverend John Moore, Richard Parsons, Mrs Parsons and others had conspired to 'take away the life of William Kent by charging him with the murder of Frances Lynes by giving her poison whereof she died'. James Franzen the landlord, 'Carrots' the servant, the doctor and the apothecary all gave evidence, while several people spoke up for Parsons.

After a trial lasting a day, the accused were found guilty. The Rev. Moore was heavily fined, Parsons was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and three sessions in the pillory, and his wife to one year's jail. Elizabeth Parsons did not stand trial, but was not, apparently, troubled by her 'ghost' again.

Even after leaving prison, Parsons protested his innocence, and his protests have a convincing ring to them. He had gained nothing from the Cock Lane affair but notoriety and punishment. He had had differences with Kent, it was true, but he was, drunkenness apart, a well-liked man of previous good character, with no wish to put another's life at stake. Furthermore hundreds of people – the Duke of York, Horace Walpole, and Lord Hertford included – had heard the knockings from the wainscot, a good distance from Elizabeth's bed.

A twist in the tale

And the manifestations themselves, centring on a young, prepubescent girl who had epileptic tendencies, closely echo modern cases held by parapsychologists to be 'genuine'. Perhaps the 'interpretation' of the Cock Lane rappings was the only fault of Parsons and Moore.

Or perhaps the 'ghost' had a point after all. The coffins were cleared from the vaults of St John's Church in 1860, but 10 years previously an illustrator, J. W. Archer, had visited them to produce illustrations for a book by Charles Mackay entitled *Memoirs of extraordinary popular delusions*, which featured the Cock Lane ghost. By the light of a lantern, the sexton's boy who accompanied Archer had opened the coffin said to be that of 'Scratching Fanny' and shown him the body within. The face was that of a once handsome woman, with a pronounced aquiline nose: 'an uncommon case,' wrote Archer, 'for the cartilage mostly gives way. The remains had become adipocere, and were perfectly preserved.'

There was no sign, as far as he could see, of the smallpox from which Fanny was said to have died. But the preservation of the features – the nose in particular – would unfailingly set a modern forensic scientist looking for traces of arsenic poisoning.

The Dragon takes off

Dowsers can often discern an energy in the earth that seems to travel along leys. But can this be detected using scientific instruments? PAUL DEVEREUX describes some successful attempts at monitoring ley sites

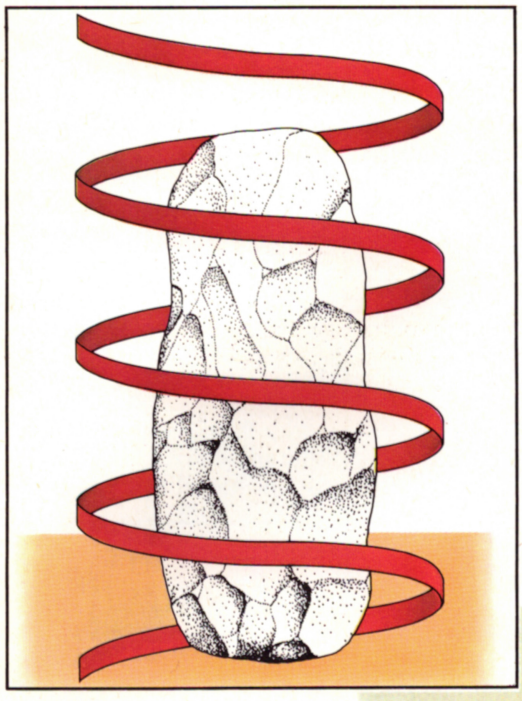
ALFRED WATKINS, the discoverer of leys, believed that the alignments formed by ancient sites were the relics of Neolithic traders' routes. But many subsequent researchers have felt that the explanation cannot be so simple: the alignments cross rivers, mountains, cliffs and swamps. However, this is now seen as an insufficient reason for dismissing the trackway theory: some straight tracks in Bolivia traverse the landscape without deviation for distances up to 20 miles (32 kilometres), seemingly disregarding the difficulty of the terrain. It turns out that these tracks are not used for secular purposes; they are rumoured in local Indian folklore to be pathways along which spirits travel. This is reminiscent of the Irish faery paths. It is interesting to note, too, that the ancient Chinese geomancers who practised *feng-shui* (see page 410) strove to *avoid* straight landscape lines for similar reasons – baleful spirits travel along them. This recurrent motif finds its echo in Britain in the energy that dowsers claim to be able to discern travelling along leys – a claim some ley experts have researched in detail.

It is difficult to determine exactly when it began to be suspected that leys might be associated with strange energy effects. The author Geoffrey Ashe remarks that the connection was first made by the occultist Dion Fortune in 1936; she described sacred sites as 'power centres' radiating 'lines of force'. Another early believer in the powers associated with leys was Arthur Lawton who, in 1939, published a pamphlet called *The mysteries of ancient Man*, in which he claimed that the layout of prehistoric sites reflects the presence of a 'cosmic force'. Lawton seems definitely to have been the first to link dowsing with leys.

Dowsing is, after mapwork, the commonest way of studying leys (see page 477). Practitioners of the art interested in possible earth energies claim to have detected lines of energy, travelling in straight lines above the ground, that intersect at megalithic and certain other ancient sites. Tom Graves, himself a dowser, described his own evidence for this phenomenon in 1976 in his book *Dowsing*, but it had been known to many dowsers, among them Bill Lewis and John Williams, for some years. In his book *The pattern of the past*, published posthumously in 1969, Guy Underwood claimed that his dowsing revealed that ancient sites were located over 'blind springs' – apparent crossings of underground streams – and other dowsable features that he described as 'geodetic'. At this time, Lewis and others were finding that standing stones seemed to 'conduct' currents from within the Earth. These currents passed up the stones as helical sheaths. From certain points or 'nodes' on a stone, this energy, invisible to the eye but sensible to the dowser, seemed to be transmitted through the atmosphere. Other nodes were found to affect dowsers in different ways, such as causing their bodies to be thrown off a stone or to be twisted sideways. These corkscrews of force surrounding standing stones seem to change polarity according to the phase of the Moon, and can apparently be affected by a host of ambient electromagnetic and cosmic effects.

Some dowsers have found that these and other dowsable energy patterns associated

Below: midsummer sunset at the standing stone of Ballochroy on the Mull of Kintyre, Strathclyde, Scotland. It has been argued that since straight lines are not to be found in nature, leys must be man-made. John Glover, however, has pointed out that this is not the case; this photograph, taken by him, shows the straight line of the apparent horizon



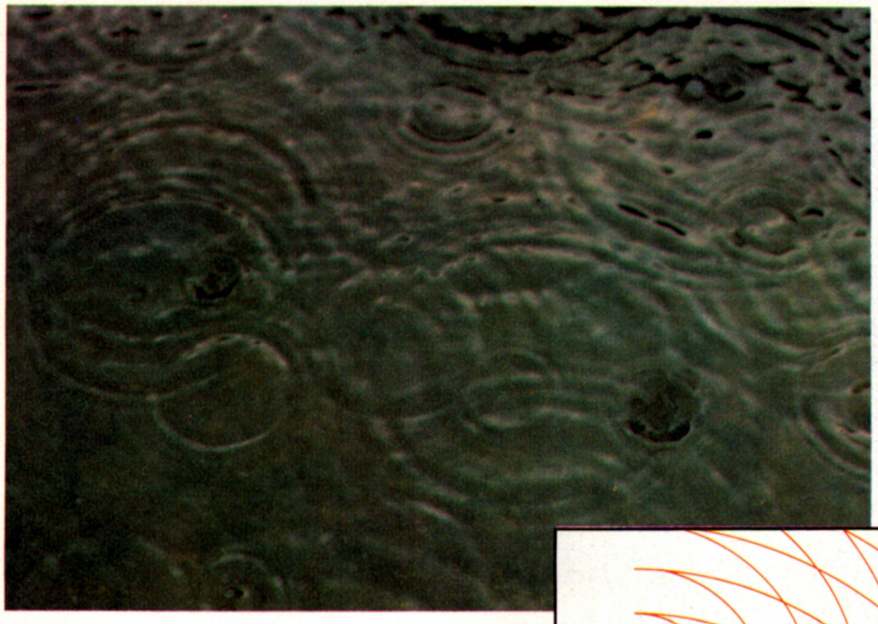
Right: Frank Connor dowses the Kingstone at the Rollright Circle, Oxfordshire. Many dowsers claim they can trace helical lines of force running close to the surface of megaliths (above). Certain points on the lines of force can be singled out as energy nodes. In an experiment carried out as part of the Dragon Project in 1979, dowser Bill Lewis was able, by touching an energy node on one of the stones of the Rollright Circle, to alter the reading on a voltmeter attached to the stone's surface (above right)

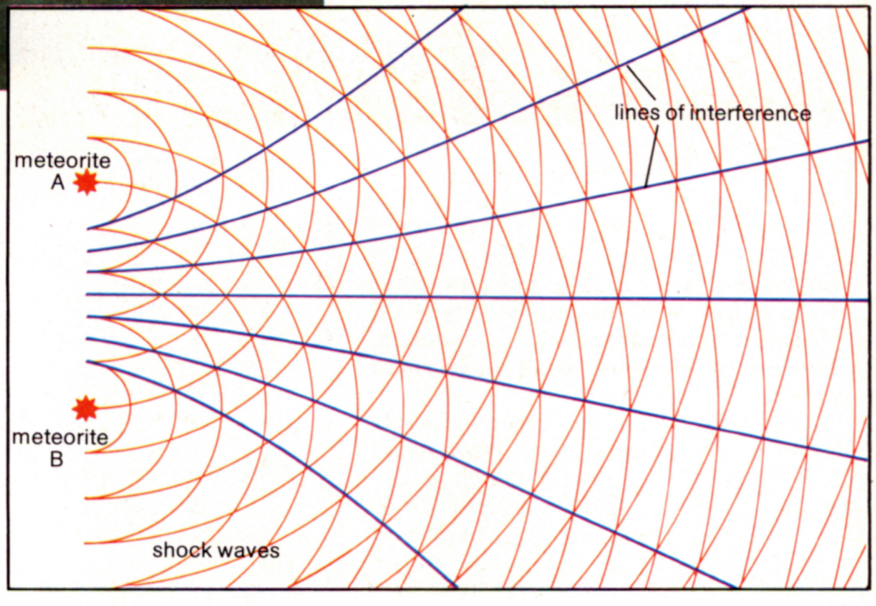
with megaliths can be deflected or made to disappear temporarily by the use of certain crystals. Geoffrey King, for example, can apparently affect the ground-level concentric rings of energy that dowsers can sense radiating from a megalith, by inserting crystal-tipped stakes at certain points. Many dowsers believe that the quality of a ley – whether harmful or beneficial – can be ascertained by using a dowsing tool known as a mager disc which, in effect, colour-codes the energies detected by dowsing. Negative energies can then be eliminated by driving stakes into the ground at carefully determined points (see page 514). Wing-Commander Clive Beadon has claimed that blocks of plastic containing specks of crystal, used on a plan or aerial view of a site, can be equally effective. It seems he is practising a subtle form of psychokinesis.

In the United States, ley hunting is closely associated with dowsing. New England has many mysterious stones and chambered mounds that are not officially recognised as ancient sites. Consequently, they are not marked on maps, so American researchers are frequently obliged to use dowsing techniques to find what they believe to be lines of force in the landscape. These lines they call leys – but are they the same as Alfred Watkins's site alignments?

Research carried out by Sig Lonegren, a former editor of the *Journal* of the American Society of Dowsers, indicates that leys and lines of force do not always coincide. He has dowsed leys identified using a map and ruler in England and the lines at Nazca, Peru (see page 310), and has found that only some of these features also carry a signal discernible by the dowser. He has also discovered, by dowsing, energy lines that are not marked in the landscape at all. It would seem from this that leys are *natural* lines of power, and that only some of them have been divined and marked by ancient peoples. It is all far from being understood at the present time. Lonegren is sure, however, that more careful terminology should be employed from now on: in an article in *The Ley Hunter* magazine, he has suggested that a dowsable energy line should be referred to as an 'E ley' – energy ley – to differentiate it from the kind that exists only on the map.

There has been some controversy among ley researchers over the question of whether leys are natural or man-made. There have been claims that all straight lines found in nature must be artificial, but John Glover, discoverer of shadow paths (see page 1473), has pointed out that straight lines *do* occur in nature – in light beams and the apparent horizon, for example. And a new theory has been proposed by Brian Larkman, a leading ley theorist, based on an observation made by veteran ley researcher Jimmy





A drop falling into still water produces a characteristic pattern of concentric circles (top). The combination of two such patterns produces a series of straight lines (above). Ley theorist Brian Larkman has suggested that leys could have been formed by the combination of shock waves from ancient meteorites; the curious energies that have been discerned along ley lines could, he says, be piezoelectric effects set up along these 'geological ripples'

Goddard. He suggests that the sources of the phenomenon may be features originally formed by ancient meteoric impacts on the Earth and now eroded. Larkman suggests that these geological ripples could set up piezoelectrical effects in the crystalline structure of the affected rocks (see page 555), which could give rise to powerful electrical epiphenomena.

But these are just theories. Because there is no objective method of assessing dowsers' findings, there is no check on their validity – unlike simple water divining, in which it is easy enough to check for hidden underground water. It became apparent to modern researchers that what was needed to check the various claims and ideas about earth energies was a wide-ranging study to see if scientific modes of monitoring could reveal unusual effects at ancient sites, and whether sites that showed such effects were also discernible by dowsers. In 1976, when the author Francis Hitching published the positive findings of physicists working with Bill Lewis at a standing stone in Wales (see page 557), the need for a coherent study of this kind became pressing. For the Welsh incident added scientific weight to the claim of psychics and dowsers that ancient sites possessed unusual qualities. Folklore, of course, had been making such claims for hundreds of years: the old stones could heal, bring down thunder and lightning, were able to move by their own volition, and so on.

In November 1977, *The Ley Hunter* called together a number of dowsers, scientists, electronics and other experts to set up such a scheme – and so the Dragon Project was born; the name was a deliberate reference to the *feng-shui* symbol for terrestrial currents of energy (see page 410).

It was decided to set up two programmes, one measuring physical quantities, such as electric potential, and the other using psychics, with dowsing forming a link between these two vastly different methods of enquiry. This was done because it was felt that dowsing encompassed a spectrum of related, subtle human sensitivities, ranging from the detection of minute physical cues to some form of ESP (as in map-dowsing): it seems to be a sort of bridge between physical and psychic modes of enquiry. Dr G. V. Robins was the consultant for the scientific programme, with Californian researcher Dr John Steele acting as the consultant for the psychic work. The present author took on overall co-ordination.

All sources of the earth energy legend – psychics, dowsers, physicists and tradition – agreed that the energy was associated with prehistoric megalithic sites, so it was decided to base the project at one megalithic site, and conduct exploratory investigations of other sites and control locations. The project was fortunate in being allowed use of the Rollright Stones in Oxfordshire by their owner Pauline Flick.

It took a year for practical work on the project to begin, but by the autumn of 1978 field work was well under way. The Rollright site has been subjected to three full-scale dowsing surveys, by Tom Graves, Bill Lewis and Major-General Scott Elliot. In addition, there have been dozens of other practitioners who have come along to add their findings to the project's overall investigation. Gradually a composite dowsing picture of the site is being constructed. It is hoped that this information may allow conclusions to be drawn about the relationship of dowsed lines with those found using scientific instruments, and with those identified using map and ruler. The work supervised by Steele may also reveal a link with the psychic impressions received by psychometrists.

Dowsing by pendulum, spring rod, aurameter and angle rods has been carried out as part of the project. Dowsing researcher Harry Lovegrove has also been on site to

Nazis in search of their roots

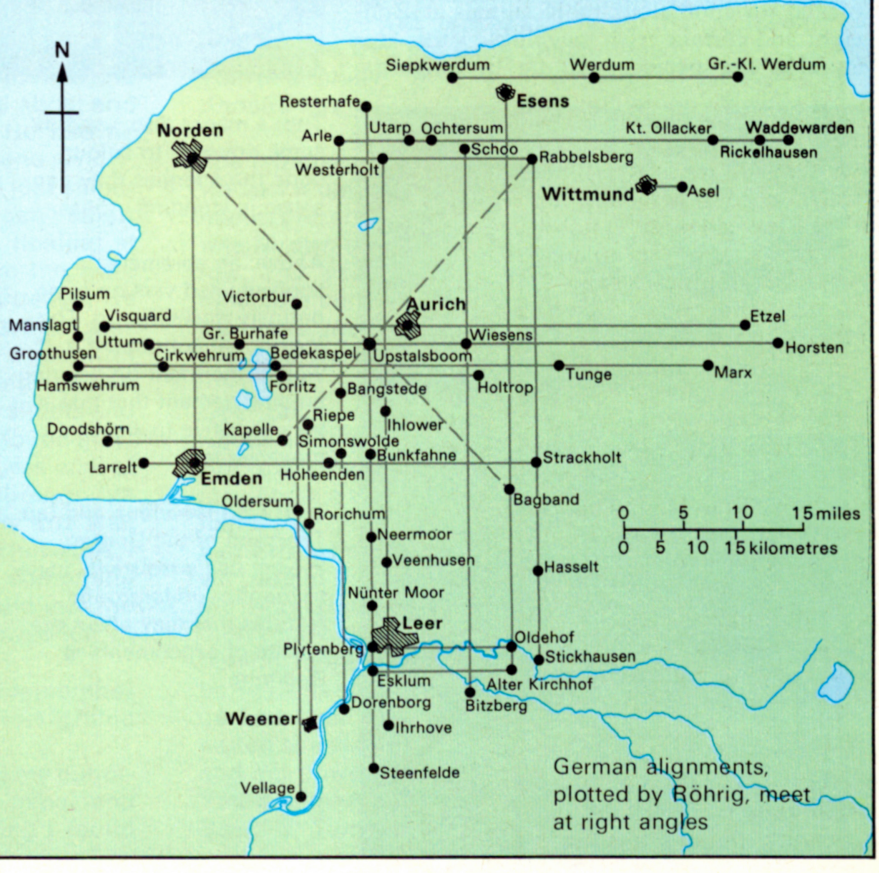
eager to find a way of commemorating the great past of the German nation – and one soon suggested itself. The Externsteine, a dramatic rock formation that was regarded as the centre of the sacred heartland of Germany and 'the great racial generation centre' of northern Europe', was the obvious site. Pagan rituals had been performed there centring on the Irmensul, the German tree of life, until this was cut down in the eighth century by Charlemagne. Himmler planned to restore the symbol of the Irmensul to the highest rock and to make the entire site a monument to the glorious achievements of German paganism – and to the thousand years of Aryan domination of the world planned by his leader, Adolf Hitler.

Above left: the Externsteine, centre of the sacred heartland of Germany, planned by Himmler as a monument to the glorious achievements of German paganism. A carving on one of the rocks (left) shows the Irmensul, the German tree of life, bending in submission to Christ

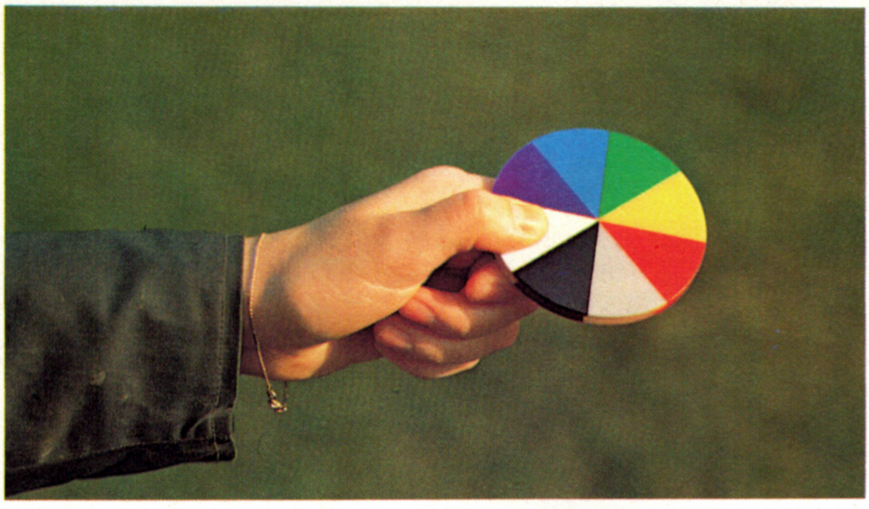
One of the more extraordinary episodes in the history of leys was the use to which the concept was put in Nazi Germany. The man who discovered the German equivalent of leys, quite independently from Alfred Watkins, was a clergyman, Wilhelm Teudt, a man with a passionate belief in the glorious past of the German nation.

In 1929, when he was 69, Teudt published his *Germanische Heiligtümer* ('German sanctuaries'), in which he announced the existence of a network of holy places, strung out over the German countryside 'like pearls on a string'. Unlike Watkins, he was quick to recognise the astronomical significance of the alignments. But he allowed the fervour of his nationalistic beliefs to lead him into confusion. For him, the discovery of the astronomical alignments of ancient sites was positive proof of the surpassing excellence in all fields of the primitive Germans. 'The more god-fearing the people, the more accurate was their science of astronomical orientation' – and since the Germans were undoubtedly the most god-fearing of all races, their alignments were naturally the best. Teudt and his followers were convinced that the Germans were responsible for every major human achievement. 'It seems ever more doubtful,' wrote one of his colleagues, Arthur Drews, 'whether astronomy arose in Babylon, or whether, as is far more likely, the Babylonian science originated in pre-Sumerian times from the genius of the German *Wandervolk* who were also responsible for the astronomical features of the Egyptian pyramids.'

Teudt's ideas were adopted with enthusiasm by Heinrich Himmler. He was



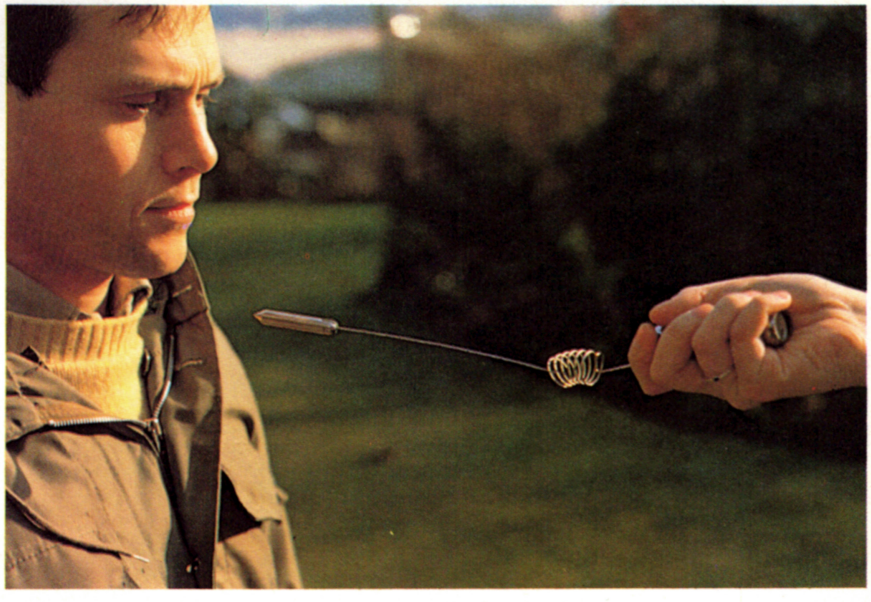
German alignments, plotted by Röhrig, meet at right angles



demonstrate his 'hasing' methods of dowsing. He uses special angle rods and an array of devices employing 'charged' pieces of flint and various electrical components that seem able to lay down dowsable lines. Depending on the device used, these energy lines can be switched on or off at will, fixed temporarily or even permanently. If this is true, it may indicate that leys have been installed in the landscape by human action.

Dr J. H. Fidler, an energy dowser living in Scotland, has studied dowsable emissions from stone for many years and has succeeded in determining the wavelengths of the energy; his findings indicate that the emissions occur in the radio section of the electromagnetic spectrum. This is particularly interesting, as Dragon Project monitors have picked up anomalous radio signals at Rollright and certain Irish megalithic sites. It is an area the project will be investigating further, especially as it holds the possibility of using dowsing in conjunction with electronic methods of monitoring.

The dowsers at Rollright have themselves been monitored on occasion, by use of an advanced electroencephalograph known as the 'Mind Mirror', developed by biofeedback expert C. Maxwell Cade and Geoffrey Blundell of Audio Ltd. This instrument can measure the various brain rhythms produced by each hemisphere of the brain, and display them simultaneously on a monitoring device. These researchers have begun to recognise certain wave-pattern groupings that seem to be associated with various states of mind – like healing and dowsing. Sometimes the Mind Mirror reveals that a dowser can detect a signal before he or she is consciously aware of the fact, or before the dowsing instrument can amplify the dowser's muscular responses to the signal.



Top: a mager disc, used by some dowsers to colour-code the energies they can sense in standing stones

Above: an aurameter, a sophisticated version of an ordinary dowsing rod. The instrument consists of a weight mounted on a spring, an arrangement that makes it very sensitive to small movements

Left: Paul Devereux and Ian Thomson of the Dragon Project use a resistivity meter to monitor underground features that may affect the results of experiments at Rollright

In June 1980 Bill Lewis visited Rollright to complete his site survey. Among a number of exciting results, he was able to demonstrate a dowser/machine interaction when he placed his hands on one of the 'energy nodes' on the circle's tallest stone, and clearly affected the readings being given by a sensitive voltmeter attached to points on the megalith. He was able to do this repeatedly. This gives project workers another hope that it may one day be possible to correlate at least some aspects of dowsing with standard meter monitoring.

A plethora of findings relating to earth energies is being produced by what have always been considered arcane dowsing and psychic methods. The poor relation has always been the scientific investigation of earth forces; it is in this sphere of enquiry that the pioneering Dragon Project has been breaking new ground.

On page 1598: a detailed account of the revolutionary findings of the Dragon Project

Post script

Your letters to THE UNEXPLAINED

Dear Sir,
As someone who is sceptical of some paranormal claims, may I offer an explanation of how the 'voodoo fire' picture on page 600 could be achieved.

The effect can be produced with any reasonable-quality camera that has a facility for electronic flash and a 'B' setting exposure control. The shutter speed control is set to 'B' while the aperture is set for the correct flash exposure and focused accordingly. The picture is taken initially with electronic flash to record the dancers and then, with the finger still depressing the button (which means, on the 'B' setting, that the shutter stays open), the camera can be panned to the right and downward (in this case) so that the image of the fire is smeared to the left and upward in the final picture. Any keen photographer, I am sure, will understand this explanation.

My claim is supported by the '7-shaped' trail above and to the right of the centre of the picture, which is parallel to the main trails – as would be expected, consistently with the direction in which the camera has been moved.
Yours faithfully,
G.E. Fuller Newhaven, Sussex

Dear Sir,
Although I am only 16 years of age, premonitions are not new to me. I have had several in my life, as well as the ability to bend metal slightly, a high ESP rate, and even an OOBE at one stage.

When I was very young (possibly three or four years old), I had a grandfather whom I loved very much. I was a great nuisance to him and he always threatened to put me over his knee (but he never could). The bond between us was strong but soon he became very ill and died in hospital.

About two nights later I was very restless and stayed awake after I was put to bed. As I tossed and turned, I saw a glow on the wall. It swirled about and finally took the basic shape of a man. He had no features at all and I can remember the scene vividly. He was my grandfather (something that I just somehow knew). I was not afraid (possibly I wasn't smart enough then), even when I saw he was floating at least 2 inches [5 centimetres] away from the wall. Then a strange thing (in comparison) happened. He extended his arm toward me and pointed at me. Later I discovered that this is quite a common event with people who see ghosts. Then my right hand became uncontrollable. It came out from under the sheets and reached for the ghost's extended finger. I found that I could not stop it. Closer came the two fingers until at last they touched. Then my finger went through his slightly. Suddenly he disappeared and my arm was flung back on the bed. For a brief moment I felt a link. I felt something enter my mind and leave something there. When I recovered my senses I could feel the link getting smaller as his presence travelled to wherever spirits go.

People have often asked me how I can remember it in such detail. I tell them that it is not the sort of thing that you forget quickly.

I was about seven years old when I had my out-of-the-body experience. I went to bed as usual and quickly fell asleep. At 2.15 in the morning I found myself floating about 7 feet [2 metres] above my body. I remember that my first thought was: 'Oh wow, what a nifty dream!', for the pleasure I felt is still unequalled by anything today. I decided to test whether this was a dream (I had not heard of OOBEs at that time). I drifted left and concentrated on moving a picture from the left-hand side of my dresser to the right-hand side (I remember that I had no body). I saw the picture move and then returned to my body. In the morning the picture had been moved. I looked at my bedding and found that it was tucked in tightly, thus eliminating sleep-walking from the puzzle. So I have narrowed the explanations to two possibilities. Either the OOBE was indeed real, or I was dreaming with such intensity that the picture was moved by my mind power. But I rule out PK energy as I was far from sexual maturity, the time when these forces seem to be strongest – although my PK energy is high now.
Yours faithfully,
Mark Meerman Perth, Australia

Dear Sir,
I am writing about a picture of a UFO that appears on page 469 of *The Unexplained*. It was taken at the Sixth Annual Spacecraft Convention and you suggested that the most likely explanation was a miniature whirlwind. It was – but it was a man-made one. If you look at this photograph carefully and concentrate entirely on the top portion of the cloud of dust you will see an old-fashioned biplane. The dust below the aeroplane is in the shape of a funnel and was probably being drawn up via a large suction device on the aircraft and then dispersed to form the cloud. The cloud was intended to hide the aeroplane. Whoever thought of this idea forgot only one thing. The aeroplane was denser and darker than a cloud of dust and so was not quite camouflaged.
Yours faithfully,
Annette Fox Murwillumbah, Australia

The biplane was not noticeable in the original print; we saw it only at proof stage, when it was too late to make reference to it in the text. It is likely that the dust was thrown up incidentally by the biplane as it flew low, and was not the result of an elaborate hoax. Since the convention was a gathering of saucer cult devotees, the picture was undoubtedly seized on as propaganda!

Dear Sir,
About 10 years ago, when I was 17, I was taking Hebrew lessons one evening a week, with a view to staying on a kibbutz in Israel. During my first lesson I found that one of the students happened to take the same train home that I travelled on. On our way home we tried to find out if we had any friends in common. We worked our way down the list but found that we didn't have any mutual friends, so we started mentioning more obscure people. Eventually he mentioned a person called Pete whom I knew. Neither of us had seen him for years. At that point the train halted at a station and Pete stepped into the carriage and sat down in front of us. . . .
Yours faithfully,
David S. Sumeray London

Send *your* letters to THE UNEXPLAINED, Orbis House, 20–22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT

THE WORLD'S MYSTERIOUS PLACES – 30
Standing stone at Vermont, USA